



INDIANA COMMISSION  
HIGHER *for* EDUCATION



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## **State focuses on success of ‘first-generation’ college students**

Indianapolis, IN – The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is leading a statewide discussion aimed at helping students who are the first in their families to pursue college overcome obstacles to earning a degree. Indiana currently ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation with only a third of Hoosiers completing education beyond high school.

As part of an ongoing public engagement effort to increase the education level of all Hoosiers, the Commission is sponsoring a community conversation and screening of the award-winning documentary film *First Generation* on May 17, 2012 at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis.

“We hope to spark a statewide conversation that’s centered on the needs of students and focused on removing barriers to college completion,” said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. “Many Hoosiers struggle on their path to a college degree, and there is a direct link between the success of our first-generation students and the future prosperity of our state.”

Filmed over the course of three years, *First Generation* tells the story of four high school students who set out to break the cycle of family poverty through the pursuit of a college education. Produced with support from the Indianapolis-based Lumina Foundation for Education, the film premiered at Indiana’s Heartland Film Festival and has since won “Best Documentary” at the Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema and a “Special Jury Award for Social Impact” at the Napa Valley Film Festival among other honors.

“Many Ivy Tech students are first-generation college students and must overcome several obstacles in order to achieve their dream of a college degree,” said Thomas J. Snyder, President of Ivy Tech Community College. “Their stories truly are the story of the American dream at work, powered by drive and determination, to achieve their goals made possible through a college education.”

Experts project that 60 percent of all jobs will require a quality college degree or workforce credential by 2025. Ensuring Indiana achieves that goal is the centerpiece of Indiana’s “*Reaching Higher, Achieving More*” strategic plan. The state’s plan charts a bold course for increasing college completion, affordability and academic quality.

To engage more Hoosiers in realizing Indiana’s college completion agenda, the Commission plans to host additional community conversations and screenings of *First Generation* in regions across the state in the months ahead. Learn more about the state’s strategic plan at [www.che.in.gov](http://www.che.in.gov).

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** To schedule an interview with Commissioner Teresa Lubbers and the *First Generation* filmmakers prior to the May 17<sup>th</sup> event, contact Press Secretary Niccole Caan at [niccolec@learnmore.org](mailto:niccolec@learnmore.org) 317.464.4400 x. 138. For more information on the film, visit [www.firstgenerationfilm.com](http://www.firstgenerationfilm.com).